life means
taking sides

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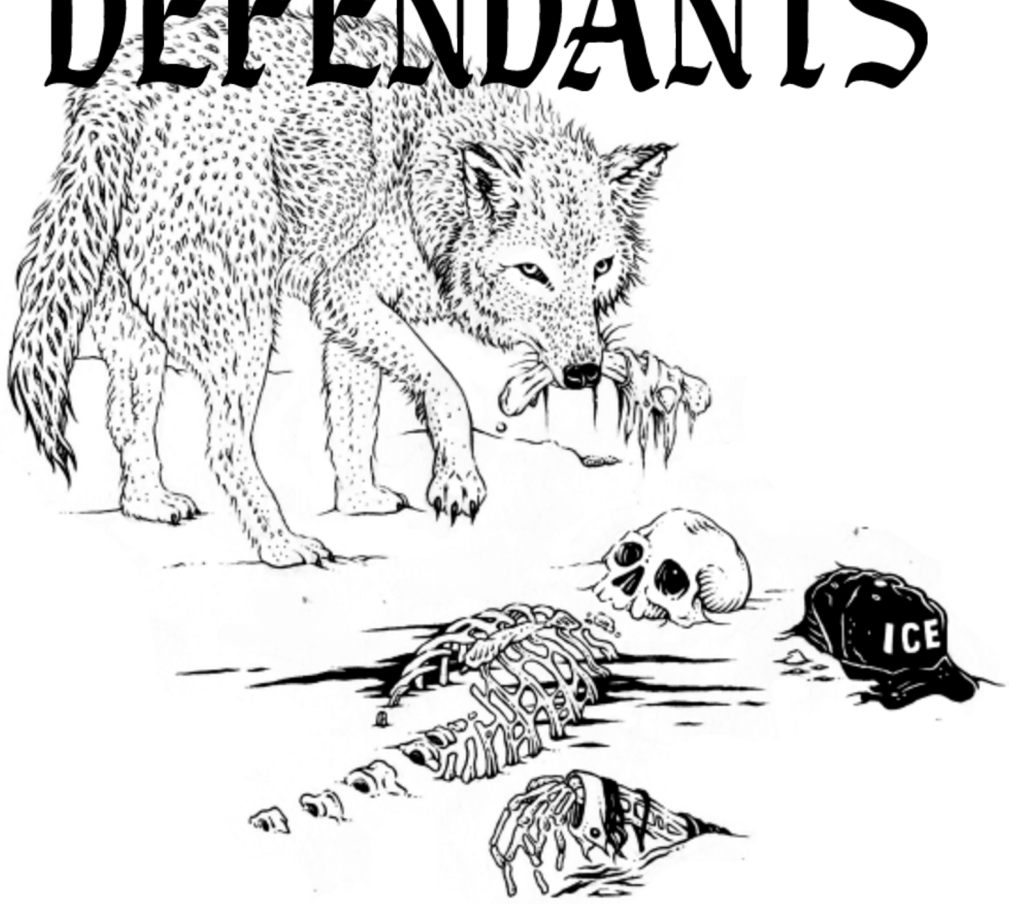
SUPPORT THE PRAIRIELAND DEFENDANTS



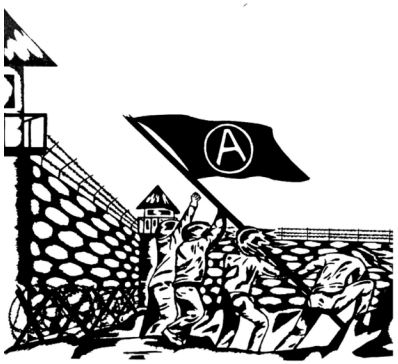
In Contempt Interview With Dallas Fort Worth Support Committee On Pushing Back Against Repression

the bridge to freedom passes over the ruins of the detention centers

https://itsgoingdown.org/in-contempt-56/

cover image from Screwston Anti-Fascist Committee's benefit shirt & poster: *https://screwstonafc.shop/*

with whatever weapons at hand



justice or truth. They instead intend to terrify us and fracture solidarity among our movements. But we won't let them succeed.

Our friends and loved ones sought to show support for immigrants and ICE detainees facing brutal violence at the hands of the state. The Prairieland defendants are not terrorists. The real terrorists are the ICE agents kidnapping people off the street, destroying families and communities. We are devastated at Susan's arrest, but we are not deterred. We call on all those who support resistance and seek a freer world to stand up against this brutality and repression. For more information about the Prairieland defendants and how you can help raise funds for their defense, please go to dfwdefendants.wordpress.com or donate to the crowd fundraiser at givesendgo.com/supportDFWprotestors.

Since this interview was conducted, the Defense Committee have issued a further statement:

We are aggrieved to report that the Johnson County Sheriff's Office has arrested another member of the Dallas-Fort Worth community in relation to the July 4th Prairieland ICE Detention Center protest, bringing the total number of defendants in the case to seventeen. This person, Susan Kent, was also a member of the DFW Support Committee, the defense committee for the Prairieland Defendants. Like the rest of the defendants, their bond amount is set to an absurd and prohibitive $10 million dollars. We denounce this escalation by the state in its desperate attempts to criminalize people showing solidarity with those being kidnapped by ICE and to undermine dissent against rising authoritarianism.

From the beginning, this case has been rife with inconsistencies, unbelievable accusations, and violence against the defendants and their loved ones. We do not know the state's allegations against Susan, but we believe this arrest is part of the state's attempt to terrorize the residents of Dallas-Fort Worth. To arrest someone well over a month after the July 4th event signals the state's dogged attempt to tear through this community. Susan was actively working to support the defendants, to advocate for them to get the best legal defense possible and encourage them to exercise their constitutional rights. Forcing this person to endure the same horrific conditions as the defendants they were working to support fits the state's tactics of repression in this case: brutalizing defendants' family members, conducting violent raids, subjecting defendants to solitary confinement, incessantly strip searching defendants, and other cruelty, such as forcing a defendant to clean feces off the walls of their cell. This case is emblematic of the outrageous arrests happening around the country, including in Spokane, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, as well as the unnecessary federalization of police in Washington DC, all while legal cases against protestors in Los Angeles are falling apart due to lack of evidence. These actions by the state are not meant to seek

A wave of repression has hit the DFW region of Texas, following a noise demo outside of an ICE facility in July. As a recent statement from the DFW chapter of the National Lawyers Guild wrote about the case:

> On July 4th, a noise demonstration took place outside of the ICE Prairieland Detention Center in Texas. What was a typical pro-immigrant protest has turned into a massive federal investigation, with 16 defendants now facing criminal charges. The National Lawyers Guild (NLG), the Dallas-Fort Worth chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, the TexOma region of the NLG, the San Antonio Chapter of the NLG, and the Mass Defense Committee of the NLG stand in support of the Prairieland Defendants.
>
> Community members went to the Prairieland Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center in Alvarado, Texas, to rally against ICE's violent and relentless attacks on immigrants, and to express solidarity with those imprisoned inside the detention center. There was a planned noise demonstration at the facility, where fireworks were used, and other loud noises were made. Making noise outside of jails is an extremely common form of protest, extending solidarity to those behind bars. As the rally went on, ICE agents called the local police department. After local police arrived, one officer claimed to have sustained a minor injury to his neck by what the state claims was a gunshot. In response, the government has arrested 16 people, some through raids and traffic stops. Yet, through all of the federal government's criminal complaints, only two people have been described as alleged shooters.
>
> Due to unchecked state repression, people present at the noise demonstration are now facing decades of prison time and years of pre-trial detention, regardless of their actions or knowledge. For weeks, local and federal agents have terrorized friends and family members of those arrested at the rally, serving no-knock warrants and conducting widespread surveillance. Multiple people arrested were not even at the demonstration on July 4th. Most

defendants remain detained without formal charges, without legal representation, and in limbo between state and federal jurisdiction. Finding attorneys has been extremely difficult given the incredibly repressive behavior of the government.

We are witnessing state repression in real time. It is clear that police and prosecutors hope that the deplorable conditions of imprisonment will break the defendants and compel cooperation under duress. State and federal agents are wielding their power to silence people who dissent, to terrify and deter the public from exercising their rights to protest, and to make an example of the Prairieland Defendants in order to quash anti-ICE speech. The government seems determined to criminalize everyone even remotely related to the July 4th rally, regardless of their level of involvement. The flurry of arrests and severe charges are meant to suppress political organizing and free speech.

Lawyers who have visited the defendants say Johnson County Jail's conditions are reprehensible. At least two defendants have been placed in solitary confinement without any explanation. One defendant was forced to clean the walls of feces left by a previously held prisoner. The defendants' ability to communicate with friends and family outside the jail has been restricted at least twice, without any notice or explanation. At least three of the defendants are being strip-searched regularly, even though they are in solitary confinement. Two of the defendants are vegan and were not fed appropriate food. The jail has denied multiple defendants necessary medical accommodations such as a basic pillow and blood pressure medication, resulting in serious pain and potentially lasting injury. Additionally, trans individuals have been dead-named and misgendered by the jail, the media, and their own state-appointed attorneys, even though their names have been legally changed to reflect their gender.

Making matters worse, the majority of the defendants are under federal investigations, yet are still being held on state charges. The

defendants' arrests after the July 4th demo: Friday, October 3rd, 2025. The 90-day mark is significant because under Texas law, the defendants can only be held in jail for 90 days without an indictment.

Adam King, the sheriff of the Johnson County Jail, where most of the defendants are being held, was arrested and faces felony sexual harassment and retaliation charges as of August 28, 2025.

On August 7th, seventeenth person, Susan Kent, was arrested in relation to this case. Dario Sanchez was also indicted at the state level, unlike all other defendants with state charges.

Our fundraiser has also surpassed $30,000. All defendants have been assigned state public defenders or retained counsel at the state level. However, there has been no movement in the federal cases.

Defendants' horrible jail conditions have continued however and many remain in solitary or segregated units away from the general population. Defendants are facing mandatory strip searches every time they leave their cells. To combat these conditions, we organized a few phone zaps targeting Johnson County Judge Christopher Boedeker, which seemed to reduce the number of strip searches to which defendants were being subjected.

IC: *It seems like there's a danger where on the one hand, there's a temptation to erase the militancy from a movement to appeal to liberal supporters, and then on the other hand, people can just glamorize images of militancy in a way that can actually let the state set the agenda by not questioning what really happened. Do you have any thoughts on how to avoid these traps?*

DFWSC: The fact of the matter is that we don't know what happened that night. With so little information like this, it can be an easy trap to fall into, to regurgitate the state's narrative. This is even more important when the claims in this case are so dubious. If you read the official complaints, you'll see how little evidence there is, and the fact is that we know our people were planning on coming home that night. We know that there was a noise demonstration planned, and we know that the reason people planned any form of resistance to ICE is because of the authoritarian policies of the state, not only here in Texas but across the country. When talking about this situation, speak to what we do know: 1) people were arrested for protesting the government and 2) the state lies. Regardless of what happened on July 4th, no one deserves the treatment the defendants have been subjected to, and this whole situation is an attempt to squash dissent and destroy the movement.

For information you can follow along with updates on the GiveSendGo fundraiser [*givesendgo.com/supportDFWprotestors*] and on the website [*dfwdefendants.wordpress.com/*].

IC: *We've seen suggestions that two of the defendants are now cooperating – is there anything you can say about this, and how might it affect how support is organized going forward?*

DFWSC: Because of the way this case is being handled and how slow it's progressed on the legal front, it's really difficult to discern the full picture of information like that. However, if you read the federal complaints, you'll see some statements attributed to defendants, so it's likely that, in the heat of initial arrest, some defendants made choices that we on the committee think were a mistake. But we consider that type of mistake very different from "cooperating." For us "cooperating" means active and ongoing participation in the state building a case against other defendants. Everyone involved in the defense committee at this point is committed to solidarity, and we support people exercising their constitutional rights. This situation should be a good reminder to everyone else that the safest and smartest thing to say to the police is absolutely nothing. You have a right to remain silent, and you should use it.

IC: *Anything else you'd like to state?*

DFWSC: We are currently coordinating a day of solidarity at the 90-day mark of the state's actions reflect their aim to criminalize people who stand up to ICE's excesses. We have seen similar repression in Atlanta, Georgia, Spokane, Washington, and Los Angeles, California. It is abominable to arrest and detain people simply for their proximity to an alleged offense, in the absence of probable cause. The state's case has failed to afford the defendants their due process and is a clear violation of their rights.

Wanting to know more about the campaign to support those facing repression, we reached out for an interview with the DFW Support Committee.

In Contempt: *Can you tell us about what's been happening in Texas this month?*

DFW Support Committee: The month of July was really hard. The Trump administration and its FBI have been relentlessly terrorizing friends and family of the defendants across the Dallas–Fort Worth area, raiding their homes, and in one case, literally tackling them on the street and placing with a bag over their head in an attempt to force them to talk. The repression that we are experiencing is like nothing that we have dealt with before. This has also meant the total number of defendants has increased, mostly, it seems, following a manhunt for someone the state alleges was involved with the protest on July 4th. The total number of defendants we're aware of is now seventeen.

On the legal front, things remain at a standstill. In Texas, you can be held without being formally indicted on a case like this for at least 90 days, and until the federal government decides to move forward, they can leave people in detention limbo. We've heard lawyers call this "the speedy trial loophole," and it means defendants do not have access to federal public defenders; the few defendants who have been assigned state-level public defenders have been told by those very lawyers that they won't talk to the defendants until they are formally indicted by the state. Most defendants need to go the public defender route at this point because, given their charges, private lawyers are quoting extremely high retainer fees. It's a very stressful situation because people are really suffering in this shitty county jail with very minimal access to lawyers. It leaves us asking, Why is nothing moving? If the government thinks it has such a strong case, why not move forward? Honestly, at this point, we suspect the state prosecutors and the feds are stuck. They probably have no evidence of the outlandish claims they're making, and they want to memory hole our loved ones so that no one asks any questions and everyone subsequently forgets about them. But we won't let the state do that to our friends and family.

The big positive of the last few weeks has been the efforts to bring people together so that we can remain strong, both for ourselves and for our people inside. This includes making sure that other people know about their stories and what is happening to our loved ones. Isolation only furthers the state's power. We win when we stick together. The initial protest was an effort to show solidarity with those detained and brutalized by ICE, and so we on the outside need to follow that intention and show bravery and solidarity of our own.

IC: *Can you tell us the ways that people's rights have been violated following the raids? A recent update posted to GiveSendGo paints a very frightening picture, alleging that people have been offered bribes and denied legal counsel. What's going on?*

DFWSC: The state continues with their wave of force against the defendants and their families and friends. Johnson County Jail gives defendants the runaround by providing inconsistent information about the length of time defendants have supposedly lost access to commissary and in-person visits for being "on punishment." Defendants have informed us that they have been put in solitary with no explanation as to why. One reported that they were moved to a solitary unit where the cell walls were covered in feces, and they were given rags and made to clean the feces.

We truly do not know the full extent of the defendants' experiences in the jail because we are just now beginning to have more consistent contact with some of the defendants. Legal counsel has been minimal, and even then, the jail has even denied some lawyers visitation when they've gone to see the defendants. In Texas, you are required to file paperwork proving you can't afford a lawyer before a state attorney is assigned to you. Our people's paperwork has been denied for being apparently 'incomplete,' even though the jail itself instructed the defendants to fill out minimal information on the forms.

Friends have been detained and interrogated just for going to visit folks. Defendants are being violated by regular strip searches, sometimes even multiple within a day even when they're held in solitary. This process also includes correction officers ransacking people's cells, and in one case, taking a defendant's notes from their lawyer meetings. This is obviously a scare tactic intended to isolate the defendants from the outside world and leave them vulnerable.

IC: What are the best ways for people to support the defendants at the moment?

DFWSC: The GiveSendGo fundraiser is a great way for people who have extra funds to throw in for legal support [*givesendgo.com/supportDFWprotestors*]. We also ask that people write to the defendants and show that there are people out there who do care and support them. We all know the horrors of the carceral system, so we need to let the defendants know they aren't alone in there.

Some people have started organizing letter writing events and fundraisers across the country. We really appreciate that kind of initiative, solidarity, and momentum. Our main goal right now is making sure our people inside know that they're loved and supported, and it's great to see so many people from around the world coming out to show that. We want to encourage more solidarity across struggles and geographies.

IC: *It seems like the case really hasn't made the news in wider anti-Trump circles, do you have any thoughts about why that is? Are there any requests you would make of people in terms of helping to publicize the situation?*

DFWSC: We think this is a test case for how the state enacts their repression of the left and liberation struggles moving forward. We already see that they have started moving and arresting people in the Pacific Northwest. But in terms of the larger media narrative, we don't really have a good answer on that. It's possible they don't want this to reach the public eye for a couple different reasons. They can see that people are already angry, that people are already standing up. Something like this depicted across mass media could inspire people to take more action or enrage more people that the state is suppressing protestors like this. The government wants to carry out its political repression as clandestinely as possible. They don't want to show how angry people are, they don't want the larger public to know that people are rising up, that people have the power to resist and protest their government, that normal people have the power to stand together and take action in the face of authoritarianism. It could also be just the brief nature of news cycle; now that the initial fantastical story has passed, the state hasn't released any more tantalizing evidence. They haven't released the video footage they allegedly have, they haven't moved forward with any legal process, they're just sitting on it. So there's a very real possibility the government is realizing they overplayed their hand and want to keep things in the confusing haze of the early days.

As for how people can spread the word about this situation, the best answer would be to talk about it: talk about it with your groups, your friends, your families. Share the story across social media platforms. We're really grateful some folks have started making some graphics and posts about this situation. The main message to share is that the official government story makes no sense and that the real terror is the groups of armed masked officers kidnapping people off the street. This is something that doesn't have to be spoken about in purely leftist circles. This is a story of authoritarian oppression, and it won't stop with us.